

In the Office communication dated March 11, 2003, the Examiner has stated that the reply filed December 26, 2002 is not fully responsive to the prior Office action because the 35 USC 112 second paragraph rejection of claim 6 was not addressed.

Please note that Applicants have addressed 35 USC 112 second paragraph rejection of claim 6 by amending the language of claim 6. The language of the 35 USC 112 second paragraph rejection of claim 6 in the previous Office action did not clearly indicate as to what the Examiner considers unclear.

The Examiner has further stated in the Office communication dated March 11, 2003 that it is not clear what is intended by the limitation "wherein the etching gas composition contains additives for improving etching gas properties...." More specifically, it is unclear to the Examiner whether the "improved gas property" means that the etching gas is more volatile, or less corrosive, or more stable (less explosive), or less combustible, or less carcinogenic, or is an "improved gas property" intended to suggest that one obtains better etching results when using an etchant including the claimed additive?

Applicants submit that the additives used for improving etching properties such as NH₃ enable a better etching result. For example, NH₃ which is separated into H and N in a plasma

regulates the relation of H : N : NH in the plasma and enables an improved selectivity and passivation of the side walls.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims of the instant application are solicited.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Please charge any fees which might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,

For Applicants

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YHC:cgm

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